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1 **“She was like ‘don’t try this’ and ‘don’t drink this’ and ‘don’t mix these’”: Older**
2 **Siblings and the Transmission of Embodied Knowledge Surrounding Alcohol**
3 **Consumption**

4 **Abstract**

5 This paper draws on mixed-methods qualitative research conducted with 40 young people, aged
6 15-24, in the suburban case study locations of Chorlton and Wythenshawe, Manchester UK.
7 Through the lens of alcohol consumption, this paper brings to the fore how older siblings use
8 their experiences of, drawing on Latour, “*learn[ing] to be affected*”; that is, “effectuated”,
9 moved, propelled into motion by different human and more-than-human agencies, to transmit
10 embodied knowledge to younger siblings. This paper finds that older siblings are an important
11 source of protection for younger siblings when starting their drinking careers. Moreover, this
12 paper finds that older siblings play a fundamental role in facilitating open intragenerational
13 dialogue surrounding alcohol consumption. Through highlighting the important role of older
14 siblings in transmitting embodied knowledge to younger siblings during the transition to
15 adulthood, this paper argues that there is a need to encourage greater involvement of siblings
16 in formal educational settings surrounding learning about important issues, such as: alcohol
17 consumption; drug consumption; and relationships and sex education, to help ensure consistent
18 messages.

19 **Key words: Alcohol; Embodiment; Qualitative; Relational; Siblings**

20 **Introduction**

21 This paper presents findings from research undertaken with 40 young people, aged 15-24,
22 living in the suburban case study locations of Chorlton and Wythenshawe, Manchester UK.
23 The aim of the broader study was to explore young people’s alcohol consumption practices and
24 experiences in often-overlooked suburban drinking locations. Sibling relationships were not

the original focus of the research, but emerged as an important finding when asking young people questions during the research process surrounding how they access alcohol, and how they learn about drinking. This paper engages with findings that emerged through the deployment of a palette of traditional and novel qualitative methods (see removed for anonymity), comprising: individual and friendship group in-depth semi-structured interviews; peer-interviews; participant observation of young people's nights in/out involving alcohol; and text messaging. Through the lens of alcohol consumption, this paper brings to the fore how older siblings use their experiences of "*learn[ing] to be affected*"; that is, "effectuated", moved, propelled into motion by different human and more-than-human agencies, to transmit knowledge to younger siblings (Latour, 2004b:205, emphasis in original). This paper finds that older siblings are an important source of protection for younger siblings starting their drinking careers. Moreover, older siblings play a fundamental role in facilitating open intragenerational dialogue surrounding alcohol consumption.

Current National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2007) guidelines recommend that head teachers, teachers, school governors, and others working in/with schools should ensure alcohol education is a fundamental part of the education curricula. The aim is to encourage children not to drink; to delay the onset of alcohol consumption; and reduce the harm it can cause to drinkers. The NICE (2007) guidelines recommend a 'whole school' approach, involving staff, parents and pupils. The potentially valuable role older siblings can play in educating younger siblings about alcohol consumption practices and experiences has been sidelined. This is an important neglect, since Davies (2018) recently expounded the importance of sibling relationships in shaping experiences and orientations towards education. Moreover, school-based alcohol education is less emotive than knowledge transmitted through siblings. That is, schools-based alcohol education is expressed largely in black and white terms (Eadie et al., 2010), whereas this paper finds that older siblings are a useful resource for educating

younger siblings about the corporeal, emotional and embodied effects of alcohol consumption. Recognising the important role of sibling relationships in providing embodied knowledge to younger siblings during the transition to adulthood, this paper argues that there is a need to encourage greater involvement of siblings in formal educational settings, surrounding learning about a range of important issues, including: alcohol consumption; drug consumption; and relationships and sex education, to help ensure consistent messages.

The paper is structured as follows: first, I situate the research within an academic context of relational understandings of age, and Sociological literature on sibling relationships. Following this, the case study locations are introduced, and the novel methods underpinning this study are outlined. After which, findings are presented surrounding two main themes: siblings as ‘assistant parents’ (Seaman and Sweeting, 2004:183); and intragenerational dialogues surrounding alcohol. Finally, this paper is drawn to a close, signalling important recommendations.

Relational Understandings of Age

Instead of simply examining the experiences of different age groups, we need, as Hopkins *et al.* (2011) argue, a holistic and relational understanding of age. This is important because identity is relational; it only develops and operates in relation to other identities (Valentine, 2003). An alternative to viewing youth as a transition from dependence to independence is by exercising the notion of *interdependence*. An interdependence perspective thinks through dependency/independence as relational states, examining young people’s transitions to adulthood not as solo projects, but as processes which are shared with family and significant others, including siblings (Holdsworth, 2007a). An interdependence perspective is thus important for considering the ways in which young people’s lives are connected to others (Evans, 2008).

In the context of rural Bolivia, Punch (2002) usefully highlights that interdependent house relations underlie young people's choice of transitions; notably these relations are not fixed, but are worked out and renegotiated according to the existence of different constraints and opportunities. As such, Punch (2002:123, emphasis in original) advances the notion of '*negotiated interdependence*' as a useful way of understanding how young people work within their structural limitations, whilst asserting some level of agency over their choice of transition. Further, the concept of 'negotiated interdependence' recognises that young people engage with significant (extra)familial others during key 'transitional events'.

An interdependence perspective moves beyond the significant emphasis that a 'transitions' approach places on the young person (Gillies, 2000), to take into consideration the importance of family relationships on the individual's life course trajectory. The importance of young people's family relations and friendships, and the potential support received from, and created in them, was noted by Tolonen (2008), regarding the educational and work transitions of young Finns. Further, in the context of young people's educational journeys, Davies (2018) advocates a relational understanding of education, arguing that educational experiences and decision-making are not individualised, but instead socially embedded. Davies (2018) asserts that sibling relationships are characterised by 'sticky' proximities; that is, connections that make siblings important for young people's educational experiences, regardless of whether the relationships are perceived as positive. The work of Davies' (2018) should be praised for being one of few papers that explores advantages derived from sibling relationships from the perspectives of young people.

Importantly, in a study exploring working-class Finnish 15-17 year old's future expectations and decision-making processes, in terms of their future educational choice, Aaltonen (2016) highlights that advice offered by parents and siblings are often not congruent with each other.

The author also states that advice from siblings is considered reliable, even more so than that obtained from formal career services (Aaltonen, 2016). This perceived reliability of advice received from siblings, highlights the importance of bringing the fore embodied knowledges transmitted between siblings related to important issues, such as alcohol consumption.

Sibling Relationships and Alcohol Consumption

Whilst literature has begun to focus on intergenerational transmission of knowledges and practices surrounding alcohol consumption (e.g. Valentine *et al.*, 2012), literature on the transmission of knowledges and practices between siblings is lacking. There are a few notable exceptions. For instance, Kothari *et al.* (2014) found that adolescents and young adults engage in alcohol, tobacco, and other drug behaviours similar to those of their older siblings. The authors find that siblings may model, facilitate and encourage emerging alcohol, tobacco and other drug behaviours. Likewise, Whiteman *et al.* (2011) note that older siblings' alcohol and other substance use is positively associated with younger siblings' patterns of use. Whiteman *et al.* (2011) conclude that younger siblings who endorse modelling their older brothers and sisters, and share friends with those siblings, show the greatest similarity in alcohol use.

Due to the limited number of studies exploring sibling relationships and drinking, here, I collate literature on sibling relationships, and signpost why this may be interesting in terms of exploring how younger siblings learn about alcohol consumption. Ripoll-Núñez and Carrillo (2014) point out that childhood sibling relationships can be characterised by warmth/closeness; however, warmth and nurturance do not occur in isolation from conflict. According to the authors, differences in power and status among siblings means that siblings typically experience their relationship differently, dependent upon whether they are the older or younger child. Ripoll-Núñez and Carrillo (2014) argue that older siblings often teach younger siblings, with younger siblings being the recipient of teaching and caregiving.

Gendered power in sibling relationships is explored by Edwards *et al.* (2005). The authors suggest that ‘talking’ and ‘doing activities together’ are recurrent features of children’s closeness to their siblings, or divisions between them. The authors suggest that, typically, girls describe talking together as a significant aspect of their connection to sisters, whilst boys regard doing activities together as a significant aspect of connection between brothers (Edwards *et al.*, 2005). With a focus on sistering, Mauthner (2000:291) uses the term ‘minimothering’ to describe the process where sisters adopt ‘big’ and ‘little’ sister roles of carer and cared for. Elsewhere, Mauthner (2005) point outs that sisters can alternate between these roles, as caring and power relations between sisters fluctuate over time.

As Gillies and Lucey (2006) contend, younger siblings rely on older brothers and sisters to cope with the demands of growing up and becoming adult. Siblings can provide key sources of emotional and practical support (Song, 2010). Gillies and Lucey (2006) distinguish sibling relationships from peer relationships through their ability to withstand conflict. Whilst sibling relationships during the transition to adulthood have seldom been studied, Conger and Little’s (2010) paper sought to redress this neglect. Exploring the process of one sibling leaving home, the authors contend that when the relationship has been warm and supportive, siblings may experience a sense of loss as a sibling moves into adult roles. Conversely, adolescents with conflicting sibling relationships may experience feelings of relief. Further, Guan and Fulgini (2015) note that siblings are often major sources of companionship and intimacy during transitions to adulthood. Whiteman *et al.* (2011) state that, as siblings move through adolescence and young adulthood, they become more involved in relationships outside the family, and their engagement in their sibling relationships decreases. Notwithstanding this, sibling relations can be amongst people’s longest lasting social relationships (Tibbetts and Scharfe, 2015), and hence their role in young people’s alcohol consumption practices and experiences warrants much greater attention.

Punch (2008), drawing on Goffman (1959), illustrates that children's sibling interactions typically consist of backstage, rather than frontstage, performances. Goffman (1959:109;114) distinguishes between a "front region" and a "back region". 'Front region' refers to the space in which the performance takes place. 'Back region' is where performances are openly constructed, and where performers can relax and drop their fronts (Goffman, 1959). This is where, as Goffman (1959:97) contends, "supressed facts make an appearance", and people drop the front that they may otherwise perform. Many participants in Punch's (2008) study contend that techniques of impression management are not required with siblings. Punch (2008) makes clear that whilst behind the scenes may be an easy, relaxed atmosphere, because many social conventions are dropped, backstage can also be a tense, irritable space. The author concludes that siblings are less able to perform in front of one another, as it would be impossible to sustain a continual performance, due to the knowledge they have of each other. Due to the unique relationship that siblings have with each other, which is often very different to the way young people perform in front of friends and parents, it is important to explore how knowledge and experiences surrounding alcohol consumption are transmitted.

To sum, the focus on sibling relationships, bound up with the consumption of alcohol, has been somewhat neglected in the existing alcohol studies literature. However, through collating literature on sibling relationships I have highlighted why it is important to explore the role of siblings in young people's drinking practices and experiences. First, since sibling relationships have unique qualities that situate them somewhere between parent and friends (Guan and Fuligni, 2015). Second, siblings have a unique role in that many social conventions and performances can be dropped in front of siblings (Punch, 2008), more so than with parents and friends. Third, sibling relationships are more likely to withstand conflict, than relationships with peers (Song, 2010). Relatedly, sibling relationships can be amongst people's longest lasting social relationship (Tibbetts and Schafem 2015). Through the lens of alcohol

consumption, this paper contributes to the existing literature on sibling relationships, by showing how older siblings use their embodied experiences of ‘learning to be affected’ (Latour, 2004) by alcohol, to transmit knowledge surrounding drinking to younger siblings. In so doing, this paper highlights the important role of older siblings in offering both protection, and intragenerational dialogue, to younger siblings during their transition to adulthood.

Having provided the academic context for this paper, I now move on to detail the methodology. First, I provide an overview of the case study locations, where I conducted research between September 2013-September 2014. After this, I detail the process of sampling and recruitment, before reflecting on my positionality. I then outline the methods I used to conduct the research, before detailing the means of data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Methodology

Case Study Locations

Wythenshawe was created in the 1920s as a Garden City in an attempt to resolve Manchester’s overpopulation problem and ‘depravation’ in its inner-city slums. Wythenshawe continued to develop up to the 1970s. However, the 1980s and 1990s saw steady decline, high unemployment, decaying infrastructure, crime and drug abuse problems (Atherton et al., 2005). Wythenshawe was the outdoor filming location for the Channel 4 series *Shameless*, which showed various shots of the local tower-blocks and housing estates. However, in 2007 production moved following disruption to filming caused by local young people (Manchester Evening News, 2007). The town centre - known as the Civic Centre - was built in the 1960s, and was renovated between 1999-2002 to include new stores. The main shopping area now includes gates that are locked at night to prevent vandalism. The Forum centre, which opened in 1971, houses a library, leisure centre, swimming pool, and cafe. Wythenshawe is a district

eight miles south of Manchester city centre, and faced with relatively poor transportation links (Lucas et al., 2009).

Chorlton is a residential area approximately five miles from Manchester city centre. Chorlton is a cosmopolitan neighbourhood with traditional family areas alongside younger, vibrant communities. The area has good road and bus access to, and from, the city centre, and is situated within easy access to the motorway network. Drawing on Manchester City Council's (2012) data from close to when data collection took place, Chorlton has a higher proportion of minority ethnic residents in comparison to Wythenshawe, and compared to the national average (19.1%, compared to the national average of 11.3%). As of November 2011, private residential property in Chorlton accounted for 90.3% of all property in the ward, much higher than the city average of 68.7%. Chorlton has three secondary schools; a shopping precinct; library; and is home to Chorlton Water Park - a local nature reserve comprising of a lake surrounded by grasslands and woodlands. Despite the varied locations for recruitment, the importance of relationships with siblings, bound up with the consumption of alcohol, seemed to be equally important to young people living in both case study locations, and seemed to transcend class and other demographic differences.

Sampling and Recruitment

I recruited 40 young people, aged 15-24, for multistage qualitative research. In some respects, the sampling strategy was purposive, as I aimed to recruit 20 young people from each case study location, and aimed for an equal gender distribution. I recruited the majority of participants through gatekeepers at local schools, community organisations, youth clubs and universities. In order to reach potential participants, I also distributed flyers and business cards to houses and businesses in both case study locations; posted on discussion forums concerning both areas; used Twitter and Facebook to promote my study to locals from each area; and arranged to be interviewed by the host of a local radio station in Wythenshawe. The young

people in my study were all able-bodied, predominantly heterosexual (one participant self-identified as having a lesbian identity), and predominantly white (two participants were mixed-race). The accounts in this paper thus relate to a specific group of young people.

Some young people, particularly those under the legal drinking age, were initially cautious about participating in my study, due to worries about others (predominantly their parents or teachers) finding out about their drinking practices. In the UK, the legal age for purchasing alcohol is 18, and it is illegal for those under the age of 18 to consume alcohol unless in the space of the home or eating a table meal at a licensed premises with those over the legal drinking age. By building trust and friendship with participants (Valentine, 2013), they could then tell their friends about the study and, from their first-hand experience, reassure friends that confidentiality and anonymity are strongly abided by; this is recognised as a snowballing sampling technique.

Positionality

I speculate that being a young researcher (in my twenties) may have been advantageous in some respects. To explain, my age relative to those participants younger than myself is lower than that of an older researcher, and participants perhaps perceived me as being more ‘like them’, and thus were possibly more willing to divulge their drinking experiences and practices.

Methods

I had a palette of methods to utilise (see removed for anonymity), and made clear to the young people that they could ‘opt in’ to whichever method(s) they wished. As Holland *et al.*, (2008:19, emphasis in original) argue: ‘by enabling young people to choose how they wish to communicate with us we recognise them as social actors and begin to move our practice away from adult-centric procedures’. The methods I draw on in this paper include: individual and friendship group in-depth semi-structured interviews; peer-interviews; participant observation

of young people's nights in/out involving alcohol; and text messaging, as will now be discussed in turn.

Individual and Friendship Group Interviews

Individual interviews enabled me to gain insight into the participants' perceptions, which are subjective in nature (e.g. of their motivations for drinking, how they feel when they drink, and where they like to drink) (Kaar, 2007). Whilst the individual interview has its benefits, there are also drawbacks. Despite my relative closeness in age to participants, some young people did not feel comfortable participating in a one-to-one interview with an adult researcher, and asked to be interviewed with their friends. To address this, I implemented a friendship group style of interviewing. I had not intended to use this method; this illustrates the agency of participants to shape the research design, and the need for researchers to be flexible.

Friendship group interviews create a non-threatening and comfortable atmosphere for participants to share drinking experiences (Renold, 2005). Moreover, friendship group interviews provided access to interaction between participants (Miller *et al.*, 2010) - this helped tease out the importance of friendship and care to young people's drinking experiences (see removed for anonymity). Overall, friendship group interviews allowed me to collect data that otherwise may not have been accessible (Miller *et al.*, 2010).

Peer Interview

When researching young people's alcohol consumption practices, the presence of adults may restrict young people from speaking about their experiences and thoughts surrounding drinking (Katainen and Rolando, 2015). Recognising the 'otherness' (see Jones, 2008) of those participants younger than myself, I deployed a peer interview method. This method acknowledges that young people's experiences of spaces and places differ from those of adults (Schäfer and Yarwood, 2008). Young people are suitable for conducting peer interviews

because they speak the same language as other young people (Kilpatrick *et al.*, 2007). Further, they often have first-hand insights into matters affecting peers, as they are often affected by these issues themselves (McCartan *et al.*, 2012)

Participant Observation

I conducted participant observation over a period of 12 months, in a diverse range of spaces, including: pubs, bars, clubs, casinos, streets, parks, and homes, and for a variety of occasions, including routine nights out, to more celebratory occasions, such as an 18th birthday party. By “hanging out” with participants (Kusenbach, 2003:463), I was able to explore young people’s drinking experiences as they moved through, and interacted with, their surroundings. Through doing so, I acquired an understanding of young people’s embodied drinking practices, and the multi-sensory nature of drinking experiences (Langevang, 2007). Such visceral insights are not easily obtained through other methods.

Text Messaging

Conversations I had with the young people, via text messages, regarding nights out they invited me on was a valuable form of data (see removed for anonymity). This provided insight into: what time they were planning on going out; what they were planning on wearing; what they were planning to drink; how they intended to source their alcohol; where they were intending to go; and whom they were intending to meet, for instance. Second, I asked participants to update me, via text messages, of their experiences and practices during their nights in/out involving alcohol, when I was not present. The date-and time-stamped text messages provided me with an “experience snapshot” (Plowman and Stevenson, 2012:539) of young people’s alcohol-related, present-tense, action. Text messaging offered an informal, undemanding, and unobtrusive, means of understanding young people’s drinking practices and experiences, as they unfolded.

292 *Analysis*

293 With regard to analysing interviews, field notes, and text-messages, I adopted the manual
294 method of coding by pen and paper, perceiving that computer-assisted qualitative data analysis
295 distances researchers from the data (Davis & Meyer, 2009). Initially, following Miles and
296 Huberman's (1994) three-stage model, a process of data reduction occurred, whereby I
297 organised the mass of data and attempted to meaningfully reduce this. Second, I undertook a
298 continual process of data display in the form of a table. Third, I undertook a process of
299 conclusion drawing and verification. Participants feature in this paper through pseudonyms, to
300 conceal their identities. Yet, in order to contextualise quotations, genuine ages and locations
301 are given.

302 *Ethical Considerations*

303 When observing young people's alcohol consumption practices in public spaces, I concur with
304 Spicker (2011) that undisclosed research in informal settings must be accepted as a normal part
305 of academic enquiry; as such, it is not necessary to gain consent from everyone. During
306 participant observations with young people who were consuming alcohol, I deployed a strategy
307 to retain informed consent. Deciding whether to include data acquired when participants
308 appeared drunk was achieved by following up with participants on another occasion, when they
309 were sober, to gauge whether they were comfortable with the inclusion of my observations of
310 their inebriated behaviour, a strategy also utilised by Joseph and Donnelly (2012). As this
311 illustrates, rather than ethical practice being secured by a single act of informed consent (Small,
312 2001), my approach to ethics was situational and responsive (Morrow, 2008). Further, during
313 participant observation, in order to ensure that I did not encourage participants to drink more
314 (in terms of quantity, cost, or alcohol content) than they otherwise would, I did not purchase
315 drinks for, or accept drinks from, participants.

Having discussed the methodologically underpinning this study, I now present two themes arising from the data: siblings as ‘assistant parents’ (Seaman and Sweeting, 2004:183); and intragenerational dialogues surrounding alcohol consumption.

Siblings as ‘Assistant Parents’

Findings from my study reveal that in both Chorlton and Wythenshawe older siblings do not have a permissive attitude regarding providing their younger siblings with alcohol. The quotation from Alice, below, is typical of a theme I saw in the data of siblings performing as ‘assistant parents’ (Seaman and Sweeting, 2004:183). Through her maternalistic pedagogue, Alice’s older sibling treads a fine line between expressing caring concern, and attempting to control, contain or shape the behaviour of her younger sister (see Gillies and Lucey, 2006):

Jess often goes to parties in the park and stuff, that's my older sister. There's this place where her friends hang out called The Fields. I don't know where it is cos I'm the younger sister, I'm not allowed to know. Like she specifically said to me when I started drinking, 'I'm not being one of those sisters who buys you alcohol, that's not happening'

(Alice, 16, Chorlton, interview)

Indeed, throughout my research, I saw examples of both older sisters ‘becoming’ mum, and older brothers ‘becoming’ dad. Consider the following excerpts:

My brother don't really like me drinking, but me mum said I can, so he can't really stop me. My brother never introduced me to alcohol. Me mum did, but not me brother

(Jenny, 16, Wythenshawe, friendship group interview)

338 Ethan: My friends use to get it [the alcohol]. I don't know where they got it from, but
339 they always use to run about with like WKDs [a brand of alcopop] and other bottles,
340 like whisky.

341 Scott: Would you have ever asked your older brothers to get it for you?

342 Ethan: Na, they'd kill me, they'd kill me if they knew what I was doing

343 (Ethan and Scott, 18, Wythenshawe, peer interview)

344 As the above shows, Jenny describes her mother as having a more permissive attitude towards
345 her consuming alcohol, in comparison to her brother. Similarly, Scott tells his friend Ethan that
346 he would not ask his older brothers to get him alcohol; he highlights that they would be far
347 from happy if they knew he was consuming alcohol.

348 Findings in my study show how older siblings seek to protect younger siblings from spaces and
349 people perceived to be unsafe, when bound up with the consumption of alcohol; this was
350 particularly prevalent in Wythenshawe. Consequently, younger siblings in my study were often
351 subject to enforced separation from older siblings outside the home (Hadfield *et al.*, 2006).

352 Take the following exchange:

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359 Kelly: I've got two older brothers, one's 22 and one's 21 and I've asked them if I could
360 come out with them and they say no.

361 SW: Why do you think that is?

362 Jenny: Cos they've seen it, and they've, this sounds 'angin'¹, but they've probably slept
363 with girls that are probably dead young, so they probably think it's going to happen to
364 us

365 (Kelly, 17, and Jenny, 16, Wythenshawe, friendship group interview)

366 Both Kelly and Jenny suggest that their older brothers distance themselves spatially from them
367 on their alcohol-related nights out. My findings support those in Gillies and Lucey's (2006)
368 study, where eldest brothers were more likely to be protective of their younger siblings,
369 watching out for potential threats. When asked why they consider their siblings do not invite
370 them on nights out, Jenny claims that their siblings are aware of the risky situations young
371 women and men can find themselves in when they have been consuming alcohol. For instance,
372 engaging in unsafe sex, or having sexual liaisons they may regret, and that their older brothers
373 would not wish for them to find themselves in such situations.

374 However, birth order and age are not fixed hierarchies, and as such younger siblings in both
375 case study locations highlight how they contest, resist and negotiate intragenerational power
376 imbalances (McIntosh and Punch, 2009). Take the following quotations:

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¹ 'Angin' is a word used to describe something particularly unpleasant.

380 My brother disapproves of how much I drink. Like, my mum would buy me beer, he
381 would never buy me beer. He doesn't think I should drink...But he would do that when
382 he was my age, probably worse. He's 24 but he thinks he's my dad. So I wouldn't drink
383 in front of him probably

384 (Jenny, 16, Wythenshawe, friendship group interview)

385 Here, Jenny describes her brother's disapproval over the quantity of alcohol she consumes,
386 contending that, consequently, he will not purchase alcohol on her behalf. The gendered
387 narrative of the brother here as a 'protector' of his sister shines through (Davies, 2018).
388 According to Punch (2005), siblings that are relatively close in age are less likely to take
389 seriously a command from the older sibling. Despite being eight years apart in age, Jenny
390 describes not drinking in front of her brother, thereby creating her own micro-space of hanging
391 out, as a way of avoiding his authority.

392 Having discussed the ways in which older siblings in both case study locations seek to protect
393 younger siblings from consuming alcohol, along with certain people and spaces, bound up with
394 the consumption of alcohol, this paper now turns to highlight the important role of siblings in
395 intragenerational dialogues surrounding alcohol consumption. By bringing to the fore the
396 transmission of embodied knowledges between siblings, I signpost the potential of older
397 siblings to be enrolled in formal schools-based educational interventions around a range of
398 important issues.

399 **Intragenerational Dialogues Surrounding Alcohol**

400 Through participant observation, it was clear that older siblings in both case study locations
401 were often not keen to supply alcohol to their younger brothers or sisters, or to allow them to
402 go 'out and about' with them on alcohol-related nights out. However, what I did see / hear, in

both case study locations, is relatively open intragenerational dialogues around alcohol. The following quotation from David brings this to light:

My younger brother is 18, and he doesn't drink, and he does have a very good reason why. In September, we had an uncle that died from alcohol-related illnesses, he didn't drink before that, and I think now he won't bother. I had the conversation with him, and it's something you need to, if you start waking up in the morning and thinking "Jesus I need a drink" you ought to be worried, but otherwise I think you're alright

(David, 21, Wythenshawe, interview)

In this excerpt, David describes an 'affective encounter' (Oswin and Olund, 2010:62) with his younger brother, in which he conversed with him about how to distinguish whether one has an alcohol problem. As noted in the literature, older siblings typically seek to educate and protect their younger brothers and sisters, with younger siblings being recipients of teaching and protection (Song, 2010). It is commonly recognised that having a sibling can enable access to information not easily obtainable elsewhere (Gillies and Lucey, 2006). Edwards *et al.* (2005:499) explore 'talk' and 'activity' as gendered features of children's relationships with their sisters and brothers. The authors contend that, for women, talking together is a significant aspect of their connection to their sisters, whilst doing activities together is a significant aspect of connection between brothers. However, contrary to Edwards *et al.*'s (2005) contention, through my data, the importance of talk for educating siblings about the consequences of alcohol consumption was seen to be a practice transcending gender differences. Rather than putting emotional connection and dependency on their siblings aside as they are growing older, David's account highlights the importance of identification and affective ties (see Valentine *et al.*, 2014) with siblings for intensifying learning about alcohol.

Whilst David and his brother, introduced in the previously discussed excerpt, are only a few years apart in age, this age spacing is still significant; the siblings are at different stages on the pathway to adulthood (Conger and Little, 2010). In David's account, the 'sibling practice' of talk (Edwards *et al.*, 2006:60), enabled the older sibling to construct his identity as having acquired corporeal knowledge of alcohol consumption. This "'doing" of sibship' (Bacon, 2012:308), is practiced by the older sibling to signal that he has transitioned closer towards the status of adulthood (Punch, 2008); this therefore distances him from his younger sibling. This notion is further evidenced through the quotations from Jack and Alice below:

My sister [Helen, 17] has told me that when you start feeling light-headed, that's when you stop (Jack, 16, Chorlton, interview)

My sister [Chloe, 18] likes to act like my mum, so she's always telling me stuff... When I first started drinking, I flat out refused to try vodka, because I was so scared. My sister had like had a whole talk with me before I left. She was like "don't try this" and "don't drink this" and "don't mix these" ...So she was like "don't mix spirits and beers, cos that won't work, you'll throw up" urm and I was kinda too scared to get completely drunk

(Alice, 16, Chorlton, interview)

The older siblings, referred to above, have acquired an enhanced ability to judge drunkenness, and an improved knowledge of the effects of certain alcoholic drinks on their bodies. This chimes with Latour's (2004b:205, emphasis in original) contention that the body has to '*learn to be affected*'. Through experience and practice, both older siblings demonstrate signs of having learnt the 'skills' of sensible drinking. First, Jack describes his older sister using her embodied experiences of drunkenness to provide advice to him regarding when to stop consuming alcohol. Second, Alice recalls her initial fear of obtaining a certain level of

450 drunkenness. This was due to her older sister using ‘accumulated experience’ (Punch,
451 2001:809) about the differing affective capacities of certain types of alcoholic drinks.

452 However, a text message I received from Alice later in the study illustrates her autonomy, as
453 she describes her intention to consume vodka, despite her older sister telling her to avoid it:

454 I’m sticking with beer and cider but with the occasional bit of vodka. But, if my sister
455 finds out I’ve been drinking vodka she will go MENTAL, she hates the stuff, so many
456 of her friends have got drunk on it

457 (Alice, 16, Chorlton, text message, emphasis in original)

458 The above text message from Alice highlights that the idea of an intragenerational
459 transmission of practices and attitudes relating to alcohol, drinking and drunkenness between
460 siblings is overly simplistic. By consuming a type of alcohol she has been told to avoid, Alice
461 resists subjugation from the ‘mini-mothering’ of her older sister (Mauthner, 2000:291; 2005).
462 In a later interview, Alice states:

463 I don’t think my sister likes the fact that I don’t follow her rules when drinking, so like
464 at the first party I went to, after she told me not to drink vodka and beer, I did have a
465 sip of vodka anyway. And she asked me when I got home “so what did you drink?”,
466 and I told her and she was like “I told you not to drink vodka”, and I was like “yeah,
467 and, you’re my sister not my mother”

468 (Alice, 16, Chorlton, follow up interview)

469 By establishing spatialities of freedom to consume vodka, away from the surveillance and
470 constriction of the sibship gaze, Alice actively manages her drinking biography. Thus, whilst
471 birth order can be viewed as a structural constraint, Alice practiced what Punch (2002:123,
472 emphasis in original) refers to as ‘*negotiated interdependence*’. That is, acting within and

between this structural limitation, by shaping her own personal drinking geographies (see Valentine and Hughes, 2011).

Conclusions

In the alcohol-studies literature, the significance of intergenerational transmission in the formation of young people's drinking practices has been explored (e.g. Jayne and Valentine, 2015). Meanwhile, the role of intragenerational transmission in drinking knowledges between siblings is largely unexplored. This is an important neglect, since siblings have unique qualities that situate them somewhere between parent and friends (Guan and Fuligni, 2015). Many social conventions and performances can be dropped in front of siblings (Punch, 2008), more so than with parents and friends. Moreover, sibling relationships are more likely to withstand conflict, than relationships with peers (Song, 2010), and are thus amongst people's longest lasting social relationships (Tibbetts and Schafem 2015). Mirroring the dearth of academic attention paid to the role of siblings in young people's alcohol learning experiences, this paper highlighted that NICE (2007) guidelines, regarding alcohol schools-based interventions, emphasise the role of pupils, staff, and teachers, but downplay the important role older siblings play in younger siblings' knowledge and learning about alcohol.

Despite the varied locations for recruitment, an important finding which emerged from the mixed-methods qualitative research methods underpinning this study, is that relationships with siblings, bound up with the consumption of alcohol, seemed to be equally important to young people living in both case study locations, and seemed to transcend class and other demographic differences. To recap, my findings from both Chorlton and Wythenshawe show that older siblings are generally not permissive in providing younger siblings with alcohol, or allowing them to accompany them on alcohol-related nights out. Importantly, my research showed that birth order positions are not fixed and static, but performed, fluid, and negotiated

(Davies, 2018). Some younger siblings in my study displayed tactics to circumvent the authority of their older siblings, such as crafting spaces to experiment with alcohol away from the ‘sibling gaze’. Despite a strict attitude towards supplying their younger siblings with alcohol, my paper finds that there is an open intragenerational dialogue surrounding alcohol; that is, older siblings have ‘learned to be affected’ (Latour, 2004) by alcohol consumption, and transmit their acquired embodied knowledge to younger siblings. Younger siblings’ experimentations with alcohol on the journey to adulthood can thus best be described as one characterised by ‘*negotiated interdependence*’ (Punch, 2002:123, emphasis in original).

To sum then, findings from this paper demonstrate that older siblings are an important source for transmitting embodied knowledge to younger siblings during the transition to adulthood. This has important implications given that advice from siblings is considered reliable, even more so than that obtained from formal services (see Aaltonen, 2016 on careers services). Schools-based alcohol education has been critiqued for being expressed largely in black and white terms (Eadie et al., 2010). Meanwhile, older siblings have been shown to offer a useful resource for educating younger siblings about the corporeal, emotional and embodied effects of alcohol consumption. Consequently, I argue that older siblings should be encouraged to have greater involvement in formal educational settings surrounding learning about a range of important issues, to help ensure consistent messages. This could include: alcohol consumption; drug consumption; and relationships and sex education. School-based interventions would benefit from parallel campaigns targeting older siblings, highlighting their importance as role models, and underlining key guidance messages. Recognising the cultural and ethnic differences in the ways sibling relationships are conceptualised and practiced (Davies, 2018), I recommend that research is conducted into the role of sibling relationships

in a variety of geographical, cultural, and ethnic contexts, to provide more tailored educational intervention strategies in schools.

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Research Ethics

All research on human subjects has been approved by The University of Manchester ethics committee, and has therefore been performed in a way that is consistent with the ethical standards articulated in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its subsequent amendments and Section 12 ('Informed Consent') of the ASA's Code of Ethics. All human subjects gave their informed consent prior to their participation in the research and that adequate steps were taken to protect participants' confidentiality.

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